GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
PANCHAYATI RAJ
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:286
ANSWERED ON:19.03.2008
SELECTION OF ADDITIONAL BACKWARD DISTRICTS
Reddy Shri Karunakara G.

Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to conduct a survey to select more districts in the country to be covered under the Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof along with the criteria followed; and

(c) the time by which such districts are likely to be identified and benefited under the scheme?

Answer

MINISTER OFTHE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR)

(a) to (c): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARTS (a), (b), & (c) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 286 DUE FOR REPLY ON 19.03.2008 REGARDING SELECTION OF ADDITIONAL BACKWARD DISTRICTS.

(a) to (c): The Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme includes 250 districts in 27 States.A State wise list of districts is at Annexe-I. The list of 250 districts includes
(i) All 200 districts covered by the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) in 2006-07 and
(ii) 170 districts identified as backward by the Inter-Ministry Task Group (IMTG) on Redressing Growing Regional Imbalances, constituted by the Planning Commission in August 2004.

The list of 200 districts covered by the NREGP includes:

(i) All the 147 districts covered by the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY) as well as

(ii) The 150 districts covered by the National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP). Most of these districts were identified on the basis of an index of backwardness comprising three parameters with equal weights to each, namely, value of output per agricultural worker, agricultural wage rate and percentage of SC/ST population of the district.

The list of 147 RSVY districts included 115 backward districts and 32 districts affected by left wing extremism. It was decided that Goa, Pondicherry, Delhi and other Union Territories would not be covered under the programme.State capitals, districts with an urban agglomeration of over a million plus and districts, which had major cities of the States, were also excluded. Out of 115 districts, 20 districts were reserved for special category States. The remaining 95 districts were distributed among the non-special category States. The number of districts per State, in case of non-special category States and Assam, was worked out on the basis of incidence of poverty. The allocation of districts among special category States, excluding Assam, was made on the basis of the total population as per 2001 census. The list of backward districts of non-special category States and Assam was finalized through an exercise taken up to rank the districts on an index of backwardness on the basis of criteria mentioned above. The special category States (excluding Assam) were requested to indicate their backward districts for coverage under the programme, as the data for these criteria was not available.

The IMTG identified 170 districts as backward on the basis of 17 socio-economic variables, which are as follows:

(i) Economic status parameters:

(a) preponderance of agricultural labourers in the population,

(b) the level of agricultural wages,

(c) the level of agricultural output per agricultural worker,

(d) per capita credit and

(e) per capita deposits

(ii) Health status parameters:

(a) infant mortality rate,

(b) crude death rate,

(c) full immunisation and

(e) institutional delivery

(iii) Educational status parameters:

(a) female literacy rate,

(b) gross enrolment ratio and

(c) availability of secondary schooling facilities.

(iv) Infrastructural inadequacy parameters:

(a) non-access of households to electricity

(b) non-access to drinking water facilities within 500 metres and

(c) percentage of households not availing banking facilities.

(v) Parameters portraying overall regional backwardness for capturing low levels of human development:

(a) the percentage of Scheduled Caste and (b) the percentage of the Scheduled Tribe population

Out of 170 IMTG districts, 120 districts were already covered in the list of 200 NREGP districts. The remaining 50 districts, not covered in the list of 200 NREGP districts, were added to the list, thus taking the total number for coverage under the BRGF to two hundred and fifty (250) districts. The programme also covers any new districts that may have been carved out of these 250 districts after 2001 with the proviso that the existing allocation for the parent district will be shared by the new district/ districts.

Since the original selection of backward districts under the BRGF programme was based on several comprehensive exercises as detailed above and the programme came into implementation in August 2006, the Government currently has no proposal under consideration to conduct a survey to select more districts to be covered under the programme.